

# CONGRATULATIONS TO MUSLIMS ON THE CELEBRATION OF EID

**HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 23, 1998*

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of my constituents and other members of the Muslim community in the United States and throughout the world who this month celebrated the holy day of Eid.

Muslims celebrate two Eids (festivals) every lunar year, Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha. Eid-ul-Fitr is celebrated after fasting for a whole month. During this month a Muslim distributes 2.5 percent of his annual savings in charity to the poor.

Eid-ul-Adha, Feast of the Sacrifice, takes its roots from the Patriarch of our three great faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam—Abraham. In recognition of the act of sacrifice and obedience with which Abraham was ready to sacrifice his beloved son, for the last 1,400 years Muslims have followed Abraham's tradition by sacrificing a lamb at the end of Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca.

I ask the Congress to join me in congratulating the six million Muslims in the United States and over a billion Muslims across the globe who follow the tradition of Abraham upon this occasion of celebration, sacrifice and charity.

## U.S.-PAKISTAN RELATIONSHIP WORTH REPAIRING

**HON. LEE H. HAMILTON**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 23, 1998*

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, some weeks ago I sent identical letters to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and National Security Adviser Sandy Berger outlining my thoughts on some of the problems troubling the relationship between the United States and Pakistan.

I have now received replies from Mr. Berger and the Department of State. Because I believe that Pakistan is an important country and that it remains very much in the American interest to repair our tattered relations with Pakistan, I now insert this correspondence in the RECORD.

It is my hope that this will provoke a serious and sustained discussion of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS,

*Washington, DC, February 19, 1998.*

HON. MADELEIN K. ALBRIGHT,  
*Secretary of State,*  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR MADELEINE: Knowing that the President intends to visit South Asia later this year, I have been giving some thought to the United States' relationship with Pakistan, particularly, the F-16 problem and other bilateral issues.

First, I am concerned that it may not be possible to have a successful presidential trip to Pakistan if we have not made any progress in addressing the F-16 issue.

You will recall that in 1995, President Clinton, meeting with then Prime Minister Bhutto, noted the apparent unfairness of the

U.S. refusal to either provide Pakistan with the F-16s it had bought or refund the money paid for the aircraft.

If, three years later, no progress has been made in resolving this issue, this will cast a cloud over the President's trip to Pakistan and preclude the resumption of anything approaching a normal relationship between the two countries.

Moreover, should Pakistan take the United States to court over this issue (as it is now considering), this would materially diminish the likelihood of a successful presidential visit and otherwise damage U.S.-Pakistan relations.

None of the obvious solutions for resolving this problem appear viable. Congress is unlikely to repeal the Pressler amendment, or to appropriate the approximately \$500 million we owe Pakistan for the F-16s. Nor does anyone hold out much hope for finding alternative buyers for these planes, which would enable us to use monies from that sale to reimburse Pakistan.

I understand there is some talk about the possibility of using a 614 waiver to permit the administration to transfer the F-16s to Pakistan, notwithstanding the Pressler amendment restrictions. I would strongly oppose this idea because of the adverse effect it would almost surely have on the credibility of our global nonproliferation policies and on our gradually warming relationship with India. I also expect that an administration attempt to use a 614 waiver in this instance would draw considerable opposition on the Hill.

Since none of the obvious solutions appear feasible, I would urge you to look into less obvious ways to deal with this problem. I understand, for instance, that some people are talking about debt forgiveness, where we would write off a portion of Pakistan's P.L. 480 or other debt in return for Pakistan waiving all claims against the United States stemming from the F-16 sale. This appears to be an idea worth exploring further.

Alternatively, I understand there is some discussion of linking the \$500 million owed Pakistan for the aircraft to a resumption of an USAID program tailored specifically to meet Pakistan's grave problems in the social sector. Under this proposal, Congress would authorize the President to enter into negotiations with Pakistan with a view to arriving at a reasonable compromise figure—perhaps in the neighborhood of \$250 million—that would be provided Pakistan, over a number of years, in return for Pakistan dropping all F-16 related claims against the United States. Even \$250 million is a considerable sum, but members of Congress might be swayed by the fairness argument so long as the planes were not being transferred, if much of this sum could be portrayed as traditional U.S. foreign assistance designed to meet basic human needs, and if the annual U.S. aid allotments were in the \$40-50 million range.

The purpose of this letter is not to advocate a specific solution, but to draw your attention to this matter, and to encourage you to redouble your efforts to ensure that the F-16 controversy does not derail the President's trip later this year.

I also believe your legal experts need to look at the specific consequences, if any, should Pakistan take the United States to court over the F-16s. I am told that at least some legal experts believe that a number of U.S. programs and sales would have to be shut down as soon as Pakistan files suit. I do not know if this is correct. If it is, Pakistan should be made aware of this at the earliest possible date, to ensure that Pakistan understands fully that bringing suit against the United States will adversely affect its own interests.

I would also urge you to investigate means by which Pakistan could be relieved of the obligation for paying storage fees for the F-16s we currently hold. Our insistence on forcing Pakistan to pay an annual storage charge for our refusal to transfer the planes costs the United States far more in ill will than it brings in revenue to the U.S. Treasury.

On a second issue in our bilateral relations, I urge you to seek legislative approval for resuming an IMET program in Pakistan. As you no doubt recall, the Senate approved such a provision last year, but it was dropped in conference, without the House ever considering the issue. While the monetary value of such a program is small, I believe resumption of this program would be perceived in Pakistan as a good will gesture and a manifestation of the United States' desire to rebuild the bilateral relationship.

Finally, while U.S. military training is an important tool for promoting American interests, I believe that the administration should place greater emphasis on helping Pakistan, within the restrictions of U.S. law, to begin to address some of its urgent domestic problems.

For instance, current law permits some population planning assistance for Pakistan. Programs of this sort should be encouraged. The administration should also renew its efforts to secure congressional approval for the democracy-building components of the Har-kin amendment that failed in conference last fall.

Ultimately, the most serious threats to Pakistan are internal, not external. If we value our ties with Pakistan—and I believe we should—it would seem to be in the U.S. interest to help Pakistan address these threats, rather than encouraging Islamabad to divert scarce resources into nonproductive channels.

I would be pleased to discuss these matters with you in more detail if you would like.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

LEE H. HAMILTON,  
*Ranking Democratic Member.*

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
*Washington, March 16, 1998.*

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON,  
*House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR LEE: Thank you for your very thoughtful letter regarding our relationship with Pakistan. As we prepare for the President's trip to South Asia this Fall, we are very appreciative of your insights on the important bilateral issues that complicate our relationship with that country.

Your views on the F-16 issue were of particular interest. The President fully shares your opinion on the importance of resolving this issue and on the impact it has on our bilateral relationship. I am encouraged by your helpful comments and we will give careful consideration to your suggestions of debt relief and a focused resumption of our USAID program as we review the full range of options in the weeks ahead.

I am also encouraged that you have urged the Administration to seek legislation to re-establish the IMET program in Pakistan. We continue to see IMET as an important vehicle for strengthening our ties with Pakistan and will examine how we might best go about seeking congressional support.

Thank you again for sharing your thoughts. We will consult closely with you and your colleagues as we seek solutions to these vexing problems.

Sincerely,

SAMUEL R. BERGER  
*Assistant to the President*  
*for National Security Affairs.*